

To Whom It May Concern:

It has come to my attention that Sinclair Broadcasting has decided to require its stations to air a documentary program that presents a negative view of Presidential candidate John Kerry and is scheduled to air only days before the November elections. This decision is unacceptable and irresponsible. Those, like Sinclair, who control the infrastructures of free expression must resist the pressure or temptation to employ those infrastructures in ways that are biased or that threaten the political processes of an open society. Sinclair's decision should be reversed or else it should be amended to allow both pro- and anti-Kerry presentations as well as pro- and anti-Bush presentations to air within the same short time frame.

The airwaves used by Sinclair are public property. Sinclair uses them free of charge and makes a profit by their use. In return for this privilege, Sinclair is legally mandated to serve the public good. For Sinclair to ignore its duty to the public and use those airwaves in any but a politically and ideologically even-handed manner should result in Sinclair having to pay substantial fees for the use of those airwaves, just as any advertiser would.

Sinclair's decision demonstrates the failure of allowing the consolidation of media ownership in the hands of a few. The rich and powerful seem never to be satisfied with the money or influence at their disposal, but are always looking for ways to justify their privilege and shore up their gains against ordinary risks or necessary scrutiny. Apparently, the license renewal process needs to be something more than a ministerial act. Investigations of media responsibility and even-handedness together with findings that media barons are not undermining the public trust by disseminating self-serving propaganda by the free use of public property should also be part of the license renewal process.

Please be aware that the misuse of public property is not a private corporate matter and may constitute a justiciable wrong.

Please take appropriate remedial action.

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